

ICT Educator Webinar Series

Partnering with Community-Based Organizations to
Create Innovative Approaches to Preparing the Workforce
for the Future

December 4, 2020

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[00:00:00] Welcome

STEVE WRIGHT: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the ICT Educator Webinar Series. I'm Steve Wright, Statewide Director of the ICT Sector Team, which is part of the Workforce and Economic Development department of the California community college system. And these webinars are brought to you by our entire sector team, and they're produced by Nicole Sherman. Our guest speakers all volunteer their time for the sake of our student success.

I'd like to quickly remind you that, coming up in January, we have a wonderful conference, the Winter ICT conference. I think they're charging all of twenty-five bucks, which is just enough to make you commit and cover a few costs! Karen and Richard put on a wonderful ICT training. The agenda is out now, and I compare it to InterOp in Vegas, which ends up costing me four grand, and you get this for almost nothing. It's all online for two days this year, so I encourage you to see that.

Or another thing is go to our webinar—I mean, our webinar recording archives right now. On our website, we have over forty recorded webinars from our faculty and guest speakers, carefully selected experts with successful how-to techniques. Each webinar is video recorded, edited, chapterized, transcribed, along with the PowerPoint presentation. With over 4,000 views to date, many of our faculty consider this an excellent resource for classroom or grant writing or other things.

- **December 11**—Virtual Lab Update: Practice Labs User Group Discussion

We have one more week in the fall season, and we're going to be looking at Practice Labs again. As you know, most of the lab work nowadays is virtual, and a lot of us use NETLAB for our IT-type things. Practice Labs is another alternative that a lot of you use out there, so we'll be getting an update from them on what we have.

[00:01:50] Today's Agenda



Jacob Martinez
Founder, Executive Director

Steve Bean
Deputy Executive Director

Corinne Kappeler
Director of Growth

STEVE WRIGHT: Today is really going to be interesting. I was talking to Dave Toole, who is the CEO of Gig Economy Group, and I believe he is on here today, too. He introduced me to Jacob and told me about Digital NEST. And when I heard what they were doing, I knew this was the kind of topic that we need to share around the California community college system.

Sometimes in our system, we get a little bogged down in how hard it is to do things, and I love when people come along and take a refreshing approach to address some of the core needs and metrics that we're all interested in. So, I really love what they're doing at Digital NEST, and I'm sure you will, too, so I'm going to turn it over to Jacob and Corinne and Steve to tell us about Digital NEST.

CORINNE KAPPELER: Good morning, everybody. Thanks for having us. We're excited to be here. I am Corinne Kappeler. I am Director of Growth at Digital NEST. I am born and raised in Salinas, California. I think there are a few folks from Hartnell on this call, so Salinas represent! Before joining Digital NEST, I was the Executive Director of a national organization that sought to include adult women in coding, so we often worked closely with community colleges in that effort as well. We started out as a small nonprofit and rapidly grew to be in over fifty cities across the U.S. I recently joined the team, and I'm very excited to see us grow as well. I'll pass it over to Steve now.

STEVE BEAN: Thanks, Corinne. We're glad to have you. Good morning, everybody. I'm Steve Bean. I'm the Deputy Executive Director of Digital NEST and an honorary founder. I guess, going way back to 2003, Jill Denner and I were working at a place called ETR Associates at that time. We secured National Science Foundation funding to look at ways to get middle school Latinas interested in careers in computing. We did a series of projects involved in trying to accomplish that, and Jacob was the genius on the ground for those. And then I took a sabbatical and came back and started working for him with this great idea he had for Digital NEST.

And before I throw it to him for introductions, I just want to give a shoutout to a bunch of our partners at community colleges that we work with, who I think deserve a lot of credit for the partnership work we're going to talk about.

So, at Cabrillo College, I want to shoutout to Gerlinde Brady, John Gaulty, Matt Weis, Eduardo Cervantes, Rachel Mayo, Mallory Stevens, Terri Oropeza, Mike Matera, Denise Moss, Irvin Lemus, Beth Regardz, Julia Machotka, Wendy Norris, Leslie Murray, and Audrey Blumeneau, who was with us for that very first crazy project we did, trying to teach middle school girls to program games in Flash, back in 2003.

And then at Hartnell, Marnie Glazier, who I see is on the call. Hi, Marnie! Clint Cowden, Jackie Cruz, and then, finally, all my colleagues from the first two years of the K12 Strong Workforce Program Review and Selection Committee. That was a crazy ride, and you all are fantastic. So, with that, I'm going to pass it to our inestimable Executive Director and founder, Jacob Martinez.

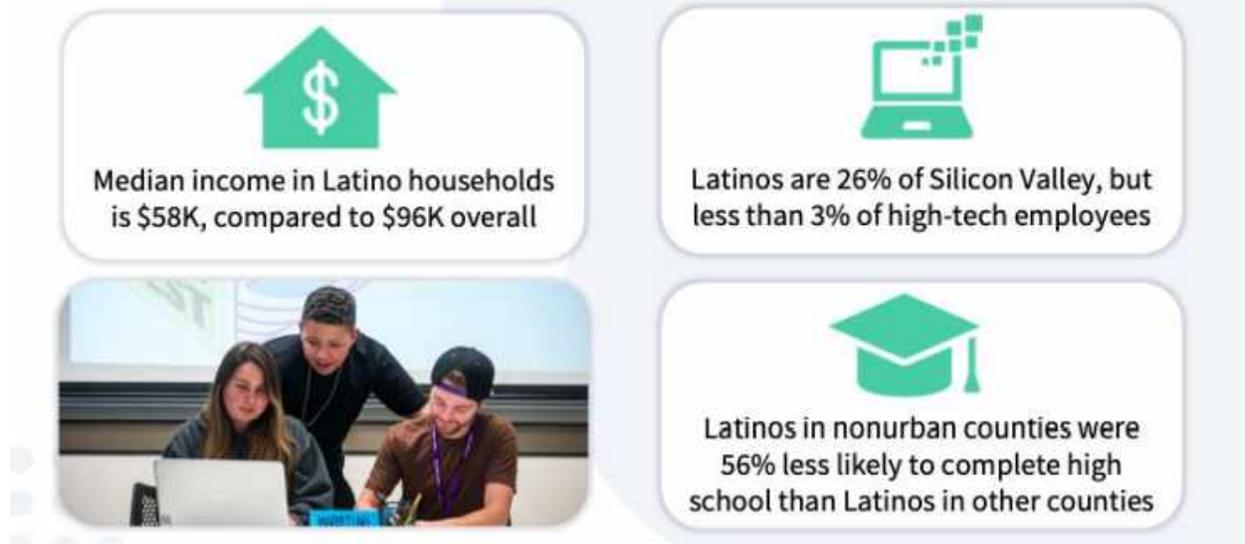
JACOB MARTINEZ: Well, thanks, Steve. I don't think you've ever introduced me that way, so I'm glad we're recording this. Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for joining us. I am the founder and Executive Director of Digital NEST, which we founded back at the end of 2013, beginning of 2014. As Steve mentioned, prior to that, I was with ETR Associates, doing great work with him and our colleague, Jill Denner.

So, today, we're going to kind of give you a little journey through Digital NEST. I'm going to be starting with a discussion and just telling the story of how we came to be, the big vision for what we hope to accomplish, and then I'm going to hand it over to Steve, who will dive deeper into our partnership and our relationship with the community college system and some of the great work that we've done with them and some aspirational work we have as well with them.

And then we'll wrap it up with Corinne talking about the future and where do we go from the communities that we're currently serving of Watsonville and Salinas. We just announced a couple weeks ago that Gilroy will be our third location, so I'm excited to see some Gavilan folks on here. But Corinne will speak a little bit about our future growth and our hopes for greater impact across the state of California.

[00:06:23] The Digital NEST Journey

The digital economy has left communities behind, while the rapidly growing tech industry is starving for diverse talent.



JACOB MARTINEZ: What you have on the screen right now is this data around the kind of current kind of landscape. These are numbers that you might be familiar with, or similar numbers, of the lack of representation in the tech industry and the lack of representation and resources that are going into the communities of Watsonville and Salinas and similar communities across the state.

So, as Steve mentioned, prior to Digital NEST, I was working at ETR with him and Jill Denner. I started with them back at the end of 2005, and we were doing work with predominantly middle school girls, trying to get them involved in computer science. Over the course of the years, that program extended into working with boys and working from fifth grade all the way through high schoolers, as well as doing some work with some parents as well in building their capacity to support their youth in computer science education.

We did that work... I was with them for eight years. We were making progress, but what I saw both locally and across the country was, although there were millions and millions of dollars

being pumped into tech education, the needle hasn't moved and didn't move. We were doing good work in our programs in sending youth off into college to pursue computer science, but then, quickly, six months in, twelve months in, we would find out that they were shifting out of that and going into different majors. So, something wasn't working, so those feelings were bottled up in me for a couple years—for a few years, actually. And then, in 2013, I had this chance encounter.

So, I was walking in downtown Watsonville—which, if you're not familiar with Watsonville along the Monterey Bay, it's the strawberry capital of the world, predominantly an agricultural community. So, I was walking down on a Friday evening in October, a chilly night at the local farmer's market, shopping for my family, and I saw a young woman sitting outside of a building, typing away on a computer.

I was in tech education, so I was curious what she was doing because I could tell she was cold. I approached her and asked her that very question of "What are you doing sitting outside of this building? I can tell you're cold." And she told me she was in the local community college, Cabrillo, and that she was doing a research paper for one of her courses. And I said, "Yeah, again, but what are you doing sitting outside?" And she said, "Well, I don't have internet at home. I can't afford to go to Starbucks." It was a Friday, early evening, so the library was closed, so she was literally sitting outside this building and tapping into their Wi-Fi.

Now, that image, that experience hit me, and it's crazy to kind of tell that story today when we're seeing those images happen across the state and across this country still. But I went home that evening and told my wife that we've been doing this work for year after year, and nothing has changed. "I've been bringing in millions of dollars into this community, and still there's youth hitting these barriers of access. Something needs to change."

Digital NEST supports emerging Latino talent to pursue tech careers and to build strong communities.



JACOB MARTINEZ: So, in 2014, I had this idea. Corinne, you can go to the next slide, please. We were just outside of San Jose, so for years, we were taking kids to places like Google and Facebook and Apple and Adobe on these amazing field trips. We would take these students from out in Watsonville into these companies, and the youth were so excited to be in this environment where there was free food and cool furniture and music and employees coming and going all day on their own free will. Every time we would come back, driving back to Watsonville, all the kids would be raising their hands, saying they want to go work there one day.

But yet, we were bringing them back to these computer labs of rows of desktop machines with outdated computers and big, clunky headsets, and telling kids to come in, sit down, turn on the computer, do this program, and then, when the bell rings, get out, so we could do the next thing for the next batch of kids. So, we were doing the complete opposite of what the tech industry was doing.

So, in 2014, I had this idea of “What if we took that environment and connect youth to that environment and bring that into rural communities like Watsonville?” So, we did just that. And

throughout this presentation, you're going to see images from our spaces, so you're going to see the kinds of environments we create. I took that physical environment of a Google campus and brought it to youth technology centers.

In Watsonville, we are in about a 4500-square-foot building. You walk in, there's neon lights, there's cool furniture, there's free food, there are welcoming adults, there's music—the kind of environment you want to be in. There's classrooms. There's study space. There's good internet. There's all the tech you can imagine to really connect our young people, and we work with youth ages 14 to 24, connecting young people to these environments and to caring adults.

While they're there, we don't just provide access. We layer on training and education with the primary focus of “How do we keep our talent local?” Communities like Watsonville have seen for generations their brightest and most talented youth go off to college and never come back, or get jobs, or leave the communities to go get jobs elsewhere. So, we're really focused on our primary goal of “How do we train up that talent, connect them to local opportunities, and then support them in that?”

So, we have three career tracks. We have Web/IT, which is your traditional kind of web design and coding. We have our Digital Arts and Technology pathway, which is graphic design, video production, and that's really focused on the creatives in our community, the artists. And the last pathway is what we call ‘People.’ We primarily teach project management, but those youth are really the tech generalists. A lot of companies are looking for young people to come in and work for them that have a variety of skillsets that they can tap into.

So, we get them trained up, and Steve will go into their trainings a little bit. But like I said, our goal is to keep them local. We want to create thriving individuals. We want to create prosperous families and, therefore, create prosperous communities. We're primarily focused on keeping them local, but secondarily, due to our proximity to Silicon Valley, we are looking at working with companies in Silicon Valley. Next slide, Corinne.

[00:13:18] Who We Serve



The youth and young adults we serve...

- *Latinx*
- *Immigration in family*
- *Working-class*
- *Underrepresented in the ICT field*

But...

- *More than 1/3 are young women*
- *Less certain about college, don't have a clear goal for their studies, and are unlikely to start out in a four-year institution*

But...

- *This is changing: more young adults who come to us with degree in hand but can't land an entry-level career-track job in their field*

JACOB MARTINEZ: So, this is a little bit about the youth that we serve. Like I mentioned, in 2014, we opened up in Watsonville. In 2016, the community of Salinas came to us and said that they're looking to build kind of an epicenter of ag technology. They needed workforce, so in 2017, actually, we opened in the community of Salinas... That picture on the screen is the center that we started off in. It was in a partnership with the city. We were in the public library, the Cesar Chavez Library there.

And then, when Steve presents, you're going to see his background is an image of a building that we just moved into this summer. It's the old firehouse in downtown Salinas. So, we're doing

similar work there. That building is actually twice as big as the one we have in Watsonville, so we're pretty excited about the impact we can make in that community.

So, our youth are primarily Latinx youth. We're about a third young women that are part of our organization, all between the ages of 14 to 24. That third of women is a good number for a tech program, but it's a number we're not happy with. We're looking to grow that number and go 50/50, if not more.

We work with a lot of community college students, and our primary focus on youth are those students in high school that are B or C students, probably are not going to go straight into a four-year university, will be going to community college. So, that's our primary target audience, are those youth.

And lastly, we're seeing an influx of a lot of youth that have college degrees that are moving back to their community and then looking for jobs and opportunities. The last thing I'll say is, like I said, we expanded to Gilroy. We just announced that a couple weeks ago, so we're going to be looking for someone to lead in the Gilroy community. So, if people from Gilroy/Gavilan that are on this would help us find that person to lead on that effort, we would greatly appreciate that. And with that, I'm going to hand it over to Steve to dive a little deeper into our partnerships with community colleges.

[00:15:45] Digital NEST's Program Goal

*Get vulnerable and underrepresented young adults from California's agricultural communities not just 'qualified' but **competitive for entry-level but career-track jobs, with or without a college degree**, in the in-demand and/or growing segments of their regional workforces.*

STEVE BEAN: All right, thanks, J. You may have noticed the last bullet point on J's last slide. You know, he tells the origin story of the NEST regarding that young woman freezing cold out in front of the closed building. And of course, now with COVID, those access issues that we thought had been solved are more prominent than ever. But I tell a slightly different or later origin story for our Workforce Development program that speaks to the growing numbers of new young professionals with degrees that we're actually serving.

So, I tell the story of the young woman that one of our staff found working at Yogurtland, serving frozen yogurt. I can't remember exactly how, but I think this young woman just got chatted up by one of our staffers, but she was invited over to the center, where she brought her portfolio, and it turned out she had an associate degree in graphic design.

And she brought her portfolio and showed it to our Digital Arts and Technology manager, a young man named Gabriel Medina. And Gabriel came to me after the meeting and said that this young woman had one of the best graphic design eyes he had ever seen, and she was working at Yogurtland because she had gotten her degree in Oklahoma, came back to Watsonville to be with family, and needed a job and had no professional contacts to break into her field of graphic design, and her family, who were working-class Latinos, had no contacts in that field. And eventually, she just needed an income, so she took the first job she could.

And of course, while she was working, that made it harder for her to devote the time and energy to try to break into a field, especially when she didn't know anybody in that field, and she really didn't have any professional connections or networking experience to even figure out how to land that job.

For us, that's underscored our commitment to getting our youth... You know, a lot of people talk about getting youth job ready or career ready, but we're committed to getting them what we call 'career competitive' and getting them placed in jobs. And we have a view of their start as being in entry-level but career-track jobs, but we have target jobs that, at the end of our training, and oftentimes in concert with studies they're doing at community colleges, that they can land those jobs with or without a college degree, and that we're trying to aim our job training tracks at the in-demand or growing segments of our regional workforces.

[00:18:41] Partnerships with Community Colleges: The Bedrock of Our Work with Youth & Communities

Though our respective roles in the 'ecology' are different...

- *We have same youth, young adult, and career seekers priority populations*
- *We are both CTE leaders in our respective areas*
- *We are both bridges between education and industry*

In our partnerships with community colleges, we have found that our differences are complementary and synergistic!

STEVE BEAN: So, I'm going to tell you about our program and how we do that, but I just want to stop for a second and say that, over the last five or six years, our partnerships with our community colleges have been part of the bedrock of our work with our youth in our communities. And as Steve said at the beginning, you know, your role in community colleges and our role in kind of the ecology of workforce development are different, but I noticed the similarities as much as the differences oftentimes.

So, we have the same youth, the same young adults, and the same career seekers that we're both serving as priority populations. We're both CTE leaders in our arenas—you all in the public sector, compared to the CSUs and the UCs. You all are the CTE folks. And we're both bridges between education and industry. So, while we're different, we try to make those differences complementary and synergistic because, I think, at the end of the day, we're aiming at a lot of the same goals.

[00:19:44] Digital NEST Program 'Meta' Objectives



- *Provide the option to 'flip' the traditional approach to post-secondary education*
- *Provide paid, on-the-job training*

STEVE BEAN: Thanks, Corinne. Before I dive into the weeds of our job training and career development program, I want to share with you kind of our meta objectives. I decided later maybe a better title for this slide would have been 'The Design Principles of Our Approach.' So, there's four of them split across two slides.

The first is we're really coaching our youth to flip the traditional approach to post-secondary education, in particular those youth that Jacob described that are those B and C students who may or may not go on to college afterwards. If they do, it's likely part time. It's likely without a clear direction for what their goal is for going to college.

And we're not discouraging them from going to college, but we are encouraging them to go through our program, get competitive for entry-level but career-track jobs, land those jobs, prove their value to employers. Because this is the open secret that everybody on this call knows but that our youth rarely know, is that if you land your first job on a career track with an employer

and you prove your worth, that employer needs to advance people into higher and higher levels, and they will invest in your post-secondary education to do that.

So, rather than getting out of school, like the young woman I described, with a significant amount of school debt and a degree but no ability to break into her field or advance, you can flip that around, and we're really encouraging our youth to do that. And we're trying to remove their obstacles to being competitive for those... Well, we are removing their obstacles for being competitive for those careers by providing paid on-the-job training, and that's through our bizzNEST. It's a paid professional internship. I'll talk a little bit more about that later.



- *Develop in trainees a foundational set of broadly applicable and transferable technical and 'soft' skills*
- *Ensure that trainees attain competency in our original, platinum-standard NEST-Ed 'soft skills' program*
 - *Mindsets*
 - *Self-management*
 - *Project management*
 - *Teamwork and leadership*
 - *Communication*

I feel like I'm preaching to the choir here. I know some of you on the call. I know this field. And earn-and-learn—we all know that it's absolutely necessary for these populations that we're trying to serve that struggle. And I think that's one of those things that Digital NEST is able to do that

community colleges sometimes struggle with, and I'll talk about that a little bit in one of the partnerships I'm going to put a spotlight on.

The third thing I want to call in is that we have a goal to develop in trainees, a very foundational set of broadly applicable and transferable skills, and these are both technical and soft skills. I hate the phrase 'soft skills.' There's nothing soft about them, but we all seem to know what we're talking about when we say 'soft skills,' and I've talked to people who have proposed all kinds of other phrases, but it seems like none of them are really catching on, so I continue to use that phrase out of recognition, people recognizing it, but I don't really like it.

So, you know, this may seem counterintuitive, although I'm not sure it is to the people on this call, why broad skills rather than focused technical skills, and there's really a few developmental (and I meant developmental in terms of the growth of youth and young adults in the ages we work with) and ecological truths that drive this.

One is—no surprise to the people on this call—specific technologies change so fast that, by the time our youth finish their training, anything we've done that's highly specific is usually out of date. So, while we do train them on specific technologies, what this does is it makes tech savviness and being a self-directed learner much more valuable than any specific tech skills we can give them. So, we do focus on specific tech skills but not to the detriment of making them tech savvy. Jacob kind of described that a minute ago.

What we also know is that, in this day and age, established adults are projected to change not just jobs but careers, different careers, usually two or three times during their career trajectory. And what we know about adolescents is it's a time of exploration, it's a time of determining that course, so we've all seen this—they change career directions two or three times in anywhere from a month to two years, right? So, we don't want our youth to think, "Oh, I've decided not to be a web developer. I'm going to be a video producer, so everything I learned in web development is worthless." No, we're going to give you a set of broadly applicable skills that will help you and market you, no matter where you go, regardless of what concentration you focus on.

And then, lastly, I touched on this already. You all know this, I'm sure. Industry is saying that while technical skills are great and, in some cases, really, really necessary, what they most want employees and what they have the hardest time developing (and it's very expensive for them to develop) is those soft skills. So, we have a really robust soft skills program interwoven into our training that we developed, and it focuses on the five areas that I've bulleted here. Mindset, self-management (managing your own time but also disciplining yourself, staying organized, having a positive attitude), project management, teamwork and leadership, and communication.

I just lastly want to say that part of that soft skills program and those mindsets, our youth of color, when they look at going into professional careers and jobs, they don't know this, but they find out quick they need resilience, right? Oftentimes, the things that we think are dream jobs are hostile environments for them in terms of their culture and their comfort. So, we really, at Digital NEST, want to see industry become more welcoming for those youth, but until that really happens, those mindsets and that self-management piece is really about helping them build that resilience and learning how to code switch and how to really hang onto their self-identity in a work environment that may not be positive or promote that.

STEVE WRIGHT: Steve, could I ask you a question? These are wonderful components to the program. I love the macro strategy and recognizing that tech changes. And this could end up being a really long answer, but how did you come up with these things? And how do you know that your curriculum is the right curriculum? I mean, all day long, we have to defend that labor market demands and the skills we're looking for, with some sort of data or this, that, and the other, in order to do our jobs, and you come up with this... I mean, did you just get a whiteboard and start on it? Or did you have some kind of research or anything to help you with it?

STEVE BEAN: Yeah, so two answers to that question, Steve, that I think I can give briefly. One is you heard Jacob and Corinne and I talk about our collective experience, so there's over fifty years of collective experience across the three of us, working on research-driven experiments about what works with these populations, both age wise and culturally, right? So, before Jacob ever

launched Digital NEST, he and I and Jill Denner did ten years of work with middle school and high school Latino youth to kind of figure out what worked.

You know, I think our biggest finding that I see a lot of institutions struggle with is we tend to look at youth and young adults from our adult perspective and forget developmentally where they're at. So, I hope you see here a really developmentally informed approach, as well as a culturally responsive approach—and that speaks to the second thing.

I really have to give a shoutout to all of our staff at Digital NEST. We made a big commitment at Digital NEST for hiring staff who were young education professionals from the communities in which we work, coming from the same backgrounds as the youth were working with. And I mean, I don't mean to sound vulgar, but I'm a middle-aged white guy from upstate New York farm town, so I get the rural part, but we were a very segregated white community. I don't pretend to be culturally competent around Latino youth, but our staff are. They know what these kids are going through. They know what they need. They know how to talk to them. They know how to translate the world of professional work to the worlds these kids are coming from.

STEVE WRIGHT: Thank you.

STEVE BEAN: All right, let's get into the weeds a little bit. I've got about nine minutes left and lots to talk about. I tend to go on, but hopefully it's interesting.

[00:28:39] NEST Training and Occupational Sectors: ICT and Beyond

Digital NEST Career Focus Area	Digital NEST Career Concentrations	Example of Target Entry-Level-but-Career-Track Job(s)	California CTE Standards Occupational Sectors*	ICT?
Web & Information Technology (WIT)	Web Design Web Development <i>CIS (WIP)</i> <i>Data Management (WIP)</i>	Junior Web Developer Junior Network Administrator Junior Salesforce Administrator	Information & Communication Tech Marketing Sales & Service Business & Finance Health Science & Med Tech	YES
People, Projects & Leadership (PPL)	Project Management Marketing Event Coordination/Logistics	Staff Logistician Event Coordinator	Marketing Sales & Service Business & Finance Arts, Media & Entertainment	NO... & YES!
Digital Arts & Technology (DAT)	Producer Videographer Graphic Designer Animator (WIP)	Digital Marketing Specialist Content Creator - Video Graphic Designer Motion Graphics Specialist	Arts, Media & Entertainment Marketing Sales & Service	NO... & YES!

STEVE BEAN: I won't read this chart to you, but this is kind of a quick schema of something Jacob already touched upon, which is really the content offerings of our job training. If could go back and do this slide, I'm a little embarrassed to say that I didn't figure out until this morning that this is actually the ICT and Digital Media sector group. I was focusing almost exclusively on ICT, and everything else was beyond, but I understand now that a lot of you come from the Digital Media sector, so this slide really speaks to both of those things.

We have our training divided into three what we call 'Career Focus Areas,' and then the specific kind of job training tracks in there are what we call 'Concentrations.' I'm talking to my staff about... That's language that just evolved in our practice. I'm talking to my staff about changing that language to line up with CTE, so it doesn't take quite as much translation.

But I think it's going to be pretty obvious to you all what's going on here. So, the things that I want to call in are we currently have web design and web development in our Web & Information Technology CFA, which would be within the Information/Communication/Tech occupational sectors.

We're in the midst of adding CIS through partnerships with Cabrillo College and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education and the [inaudible] Unified School District, as well as ETR Associates and an NSF grant. And we're doing feasibility or viability research right now on some kind of database operator/data management.

What you see in the next column, I think, is really important. For every single one of our concentrations, we have one or more target entry-level but career-track jobs that youth can land with or without a college degree as a result of completing our training. I just gave one example in each of those concentrations. There are more.

But we really try to cut Gordian knot of assessment and take those target jobs, determine what qualifications would make a kid competitive, and then reverse-engineer our programs from there. So, that's how we try to make sure they can really compete for these jobs. I don't have time to tell too many stories. Maybe if people are interested in a quick Q&A, I can, but we have examples of youth who have out-competed other youth who had college degrees for the same jobs, based on the real-world experience they get working with us.

The last thing I want to say about this slide is just that, you know, ICT is a weird thing. Again, I'm preaching to the choir here, but the way the California standards parse things out, to me, is way out of date. So, there are ICT jobs where I wrote no and yes—it's because there are ICT jobs in these other occupational sectors (and vice versa) that really we're aimed at. I think you are, too.

Like, where in the standards do you find project manager? Or my favorite example is product manager, right? One of our board members is a product manager. I think it's a great job for a lot of our youth, but most of our youth and their families and even people I talk to on the street don't even realize that every single thing they buy has gone through the hands of a product manager. Is that an ICT job? Yes and no, because all jobs at this point require some ICT knowledge and expertise, but there are certainly lots of product manager jobs in the ICT and Digital Media sectors.

[00:32:19] 'NEST-Ready' for a Career, Easy as 1, 2, 3, BE!

1. *Level 1 – Novice/Beginner Training*
2. *Level 2 – Intermediate Training*
3. *Level 3 – Advanced Training/bizzNEST Prep*

B. bizzNEST Paid, On-the-Job Training/Professional Internship

E. NEST-Ed 'Soft Skills' Training

STEVE BEAN: All right, very quickly, on this slide, our job training is organized into what we call '1, 2, 3, BE!' So, level one, our Novice/Beginner Training. These are all internal. There's no really external framework this is linked to. Second level is Intermediate. (That's my timer telling me I've got five minutes. Excuse me for a second.) And right from the get-go, at the Beginner/Novice level, our training is largely project based, and that escalates or increases or intensifies at level two. Level three is our Advanced Training. It's really focused on bizzNEST Prep.

So, I'll tell you what bizzNEST is, and then you can just imagine the level three training, which is small group, more independent, project-based learning to ready for bizzNEST, because bizzNEST is our paid, on-the-job professional internship. We have a social enterprise that provides business- and tech-related products and services to primarily small businesses in the community, but we've had business clients anywhere from two-person mom-and-pop stores to thousand-person multinational companies.

And each one of our training tracks produces a product or a service available to businesses—marketing videos, graphic design, logo development, website design and development—and our youth get paid to do that client work under the supervision of trained professionals. And while I'll put our '1, 2, 3, BE!' training up against anybody's, bizzNEST, I have to say, is really where the deal gets sealed. It's where our youth really learn how to operate in a professional environment, use a project management system, talk to clients, develop their portfolios. They practice whiteboarding and interviewing skills, and that's where they really get ready to career launch.

And then the E is that soft-skills component I talked about, the five elements, and that's interwoven. It's integral to every single level. So, from level one on, that's how we run our workshops, that's how we run our project meetings. It's just the air we breathe in terms of how we work with each other as professionals. We expect our staff to learn it and to master it and then role model it, as well as teach it to the youth. Next slide, if you would, Corinne.

[00:34:54] Gaps & Challenges/Complements & Synergies

CC Gaps/Challenges
1. Provide more project-based learning
2. Integrate more work-based learning
3. Provide more earning-and-learning in students' field of study
4. Academic policies/procedures can be obstacles to keeping curriculum current/responding to rapid changes in industry
5. Ensure that instructors are culturally sensitive, if not culturally competent
6. Deliver sustained "soft skills" [sic] training within academic programs
7. Ensure that students are "career competitive" as well as degreed/certified
8. Ensure students launch their careers
9. Tensions between "equity" and "equal access" in the public sector

**Gaps & Challenges;
Complements &
Synergies:**

The Legacy of Academia
vs. Starving Non- Profit
Syndrome, and the
"Algebra" of Community
College + Digital NEST
Partnerships

Digital NEST Gaps/Challenges
1. Relational approach is effective but resource-intensive
2. Resource-intensiveness of relational approach poses challenges for scaling
3. We do not currently offer degrees or industry certifications
4. No guaranteed/categorical funding
5. Not yet an approved WIOA trainer
6. While we offer work experience to high school students, it is very difficult to articulate/dual-enroll our courses

STEVE BEAN: All right, so in my last few minutes, how do we partner with community colleges? I think Steve did a great job at the beginning of talking about the challenges that you all face, and I've seen those challenges. But I should say that the gaps and challenges that I've seen in our community college partners that are listed on, I guess, the left-hand side of the slides.

These are things that I have seen in our partners. You may or may not be facing all these things. I don't mean for this to be a one-size-fits-all, and results will vary, but we have our own challenges. I mean, we have the great benefit of being private and nimble and not being beholden to kind of an equality-based or equal access-based approach, so we can really zero in on priority populations without being accused of being unfair.

But we have our own challenges, and those are... Our special sauce, as people like to say, is we build relationships with youth. And it goes to Steve's question—how do we be effective? And that's a big part of it, but it's super resource intensive, and that very resource intensiveness poses a challenge for us for scaling. How do you scale a high-touch program?

We don't offer any degrees or even yet industry certifications, so that's one of the advantages that you all have that you'll see in our partnerships we really leverage. And then we don't have any guaranteed or categorical funding. Corinne and Jacob are out there beating the bushes for every penny that we need to do our program.

We're not yet a WIOA-approved trainer. We'd like to be. We're aiming to be, but it means we can't take trainees from the Workforce Development boards and get reimbursed for training them. And while we offer work experience to high school students, because we're not a college or a school, we ourselves can't offer articulated or dual enrollment courses.

[00:37:02] Community College + NEST Partnering Strategies

**Digital NEST, Watsonville High School & Cabrillo College:
Digital Media Crew**

CC Gaps/Challenges
1. Provide more project-based learning
2. Integrate more work-based learning
7. Ensure that students are "career competitive" as well as degreed/certified
8. Ensure students launch their careers
9. Tensions between "equity" and "equal access" in the public sector

Digital NEST Gaps/Challenges
3. We do not currently offer degrees or industry certifications
6. We offer work experience to high school students, but it's very difficult to articulate/dual-enroll our courses

STEVE BEAN: I'm running late, so I'm not going to get through three examples. So, let me leave these examples for you to peruse, and I will talk about one of them for just a minute. So, Corinne, if you would go to the third slide...

The Salinas NEST and Hartnell College's Theater & Cinematic Arts Department Make Art Your Day Job... in Video!

CC Gaps/Challenges
1. Provide more project-based learning
2. Integrate more work-based learning
3. Provide more earning-and-learning in students' field of study
8. Ensure students launch their careers
9. Tensions between "equity" and "equal access" in the public sector

Digital NEST Gaps/Challenges
1. Relational approach is effective but resource-intensive
2. Resource-intensiveness of relational approach poses challenges for scaling
3. We do not currently offer degrees or industry certifications

Because Marnie is here, I've got to give a shoutout to Hartnell College and Marnie Glazier. So, an example of a community college partnership that we've undertaken that, I think, speaks to how we're trying to help the community college fill its gaps and challenges, and that community college is filling our gaps and challenges, is through what we call 'Make Art Your Day Job... In Video!' project or program or initiative.

So, this is with Marnie. She's the department chair of their Theater and Cinematic Arts department. She has a transfer degree program in Cinematic Arts that lines up really nicely with our video production training. We do not have video production training at our Salinas center. We have it at our Watsonville center. And as you can imagine, it's a pretty heavy lift resource wise to start a whole training program at a center.

So, we were talking to Marnie, and we said, "Hey, why don't we do this? You're giving your students the fundamentals in video production through your transfer degree program. Why don't we look at, about a year into that program, let's create a bridge program that's cotaught between Digital NEST instructors and your faculty? And that bridge program would be aimed at getting your kids ready, on the basis of those foundational skills, to go right into that bizzNEST paid internship? There's probably some stuff they need to learn technically. There's probably some stuff they need

to learn about how to operate in bizzNEST that they get in our bizzNEST Prep program. So, let's do kind of a hybrid of the second half of level two and bizzNEST Prep and get your kids... Every kid we work with needs a paid earn-and-learn opportunity that's going to lead right into bizzNEST."

So, we're really in the planning stages. We're looking at where they're at, at the end of that first year, what that bridge program should look like, but I'm happy to say that we have three of her... Well, we had three of her students apply and get accepted into the bizzNEST program, just on the basis of their college training. And while two of them were unable to accept those positions because of various factors like COVID, we do have one of her students working as we speak in our bizzNEST social enterprise.

So, with that example and the other ones on the slides, I'm over time, so I'm going to pass it over to Corinne, who really needs to do the important piece of talking to you about how we're trying to grow and grow these partnerships with community colleges.

STEVE WRIGHT: Steve, could I ask you one question? Those partnerships that you had at those colleges, I see some of the people you mentioned on here. I see Marnie on here. Have the colleges been able to utilize Strong Workforce program funds in any way to help support the effort? Or has the funding come from external sources?

STEVE BEAN: Both, Steve. So, very quickly because I'm shorting Corinne on time, we have partners on two Strong Workforce K12, not community college, although we are looking at that with the CIS department at Cabrillo, but K12 Strong Workforce programs... I didn't get the example in here, but we're working with Cabrillo College and the COE on a CIS pathway and then with the district on their signature CTE pathways, but that links up to Cabrillo through dual enrollment and articulation.

STEVE WRIGHT: Good. I'm just glad to know that already the precedent has been set. It's easier for other colleges to copy something that has been done where funding is concerned than it is to reinvent something. All right, thank you, Steve, very much.

STEVE BEAN: You bet. And again, Corinne is going to talk about how we're looking to expand these partnerships.

[00:41:17] Growing Our Movement Across California



CORINNE KAPPELER: Thanks, Steve. Yeah, so as Jacob shared, we just announced that we're going to launch a new third NEST in Gilroy, so that's going to kind of, with our Watsonville site that's existed for six years and Salinas now growing... We have a site in Salinas, as Steve shares in his background, that's twice the size of our Watsonville NEST. So, we're growing and really trying to ramp up the Monterey Bay region, so making sure that there are NESTs in each of these communities that are similar that really meet our criteria of growth.

And that criteria is that the location should have a significant Latinx population, income kind of less than a median income that's less than \$65,000, population should skew a little bit younger, and the proximity to community colleges within commuter range is essential.

So, in terms of expansion beyond this Monterey Bay region, we're looking to expand toward the San Joaquin Valley in the coming year and then, beyond that, going up toward the North Bay/Napa area. So, our expansion is only going to accelerate from here, and we're really looking for communities, again, that meet that criteria, but also that community college

partnership is essential. I've already had some folks reaching out to me in the chat, and I really appreciate that, talking about when we're coming to their areas. We're really hoping to be all across California in the coming years.

But one of the things that we found through COVID and bringing some of our programs online—and I think, Steve, you had mentioned this a little bit earlier—is just that we haven't had opportunities to bring in some folks from outside of these regions specifically, and some in between. So, as Hartnell is expanding to places like Castroville, which kind of sits between Watsonville and Salinas, how can we bring in that community in sort of a hybrid in-person/virtual model?

So, we're really open to exploring all of the kind of possibilities related to that, but, again, community colleges, we want to have relationships with you. We want to make sure that we are connecting with you early, so we can start to have those conversations about potentially in us to your community.

So, with that, I want to get us to the point where we can have a discussion, and I've also put all of our contact information here, so please reach out to us, but I think we have a few minutes for conversation, so we welcome that now.

[00:44:01] Questions

STEVE WRIGHT: Well, we certainly do. I mean, this is an exceptional program that you've developed, and I really love the way it is... I guess I would call it customer focused, customer being student, and meeting them where they are and then rapidly thinking about the goal, which is work, you know? Sometimes we get it confused with other things.

And I think the key right here—and I hope the way the discussion goes will center around this—is how can we help integrate this kind of thing into the community college system? I've seen a couple things in the chat about departmental labor and Strong Workforce things. Everything takes time and money and paperwork and that kind of stuff, so whenever we have a model for something, it's good. Perhaps some of those grants that you've already gotten with Strong Workforce, if it's possible to have a copy of them to put on the archive, people could see that, and they could see what the wording was and what the metrics proposed were and that sort of thing. That's where we all get hung up these days—what's it going to produce in terms of metrics?

I'm going to leave it up to the group now. If anybody wants to go ahead on chat or just speak out, if you like.

How many students currently participate? Anybody want to take that?

STEVE BEAN: You want me to take that one?

JACOB MARTINEZ: Yeah, go ahead, Steve.

STEVE BEAN: Well, so this is going to be a little bit of a long answer because, hopefully, you got a clear-ish picture that we have a lot of layers to our program. So, youth can come to us through the free drop-in community technology center that Jacob described, just to provide them with access to tech in a safe and collaborative space to use it. So, we have over 2200 youth enrolled as members. Our membership is free, but not all those youth are job trainees.

So, from there, I like to jump down to about a quarter of those youth are what I would call highly active. So, when we were open during COVID, they were there a couple days a week or every day—some of those being trainees, some of those being youth who were leveraging the center for their studies, some of those being youth who were leveraging the center to start small businesses.

And then I like to drop down to our four CFAs, which is really five programs because WIT is at both Salinas and Watsonville. Each have about twenty to thirty active trainees at any given time, and then bizzNEST has about twenty-five bizzNEST paid member consultants. And then I would say there's probably another similarly sized group, twenty to twenty-five, who I might call connected alumni. So, these are youth who have, on some level, completed our program and are launching their careers, but they're coming back to us, particularly for Jacob, who is the networker extraordinaire, for referrals to connections, to potential jobs, advice on where to find jobs, how to land those jobs. So, I don't know—what does that total up to? Well, I guess about 500 active participants at any given time.

STEVE WRIGHT: Well, that's great. It's important information, you know? We hate to think of it this way because the quality of the program is what really makes it work, but when you look at grants like Department of Labor and that sort of thing, bottom line, they're going to say, "How much does it cost? How many people is it?" and they divide it, you know? Is it \$6,000 per head? \$10,000 per head? Or whatever? \$10,000 usually being the most they would ever fund, but then how do you describe how long they're there and everything else as factors with that?

So, ultimately, that's one of the measures. We all learn that case management and what you're doing is critical. I mean, that is the way you get people to succeed. Any time we abandon that, we're just throwing the dice. This is terrific.

OK, more questions from the chat box. *Do you deal with cybersecurity?*

STEVE BEAN: Yes and no. So, I'm actually going to out us here. We have a grant from the National Science Foundation through the CS for All funding stream that we landed to do a cybersecurity-focused CIS pathway as an RPP with Cabrillo and the district and ETR Associates.

And a lot of that work has been focused on the district, which went through a CTE leadership transition. So, what the districts have really been working on are the building blocks of that, right? While we want to introduce students to cybersecurity out of the gate, it's hard to do that until they get the fundamentals of either programming, if they're going to go down that route for cybersecurity, or network administration. So, it's branded as cybersecurity, but we've really been working on those fundamentals.

Now, both Cabrillo College, the COE, and the district are doubling down on that. The Cabrillo Intro to Cybersecurity course is going to be the capstone kind of course that they aim at for all those pathways.

STEVE WRIGHT: I think you listed... Did you say Irvin Lemus is working with you on one of these? Yeah, he's—

STEVE BEAN: Yeah, and actually, Terri Oropeza, who is on this call, you've probably seen some comments from her. She's a real leader at Cabrillo in this effort.

STEVE WRIGHT: Right. So, I know you got the grassroots aspect of that down pretty good. They have wonderful programs.

So, in this day of COVID, how do you see your program being adaptable? I mean, if we're in some kind of keeping spaces and masks and alternating lockdowns and unlockings for the next year, some kind of hybrid environment, do you see your program being able to thrive and grow in that situation?

JACOB MARTINEZ: Yeah, one of the... You know, we get that question a lot. It's been pretty interesting for us. Back in March, we were literally in the office and, over the weekend, we told everybody to go home, and no one is going to come in on Monday.

So, we were worried initially that we would... Word on the street was that philanthropy was going to pull back and that it's going to be tight for organizations and that we should look at cutting. But the opposite thing happened for us. We were being asked to do a lot more, whether it was helping nonprofits with getting their communication out around COVID, helping elementary school kids with content, helping teachers get content out to them.

So, we actually mobilized our youth to do that work. So, we launched a new program called NEST Core, which is really "How do we get our youth to be active agents of change in their community?" So, we actually expanded to a new program. We're really proud of that program. It's something that we're looking at carrying forward, even post-COVID—how do we have a cohort of youth that are ready to tackle community issues and community challenges with the skills that they have?

So, we're looking at doing things like that. Also, I think it was Corinne that mentioned it, or Steve, around this hybrid model, you know? We've moved our classes online. We have youth from outside the area tapping in. Is there some sort of hybrid model going into the future where we have youth on site, but also youth are able to tap in virtually? It's something we're exploring. We want to reach more youth, and that might be a way we could do it.

STEVE WRIGHT: Yeah, we're all learning from this epidemic. And certainly, our fourth graders and fifth graders are learning, too. It's the new normal! I'm glad you're adapting that way. And certainly, if there's anything we can do statewide to help you, we have statewide reach through this group, the ICT Sector Team, and we would be happy to reach out.

One last question I had is *how do you find you're most successful in getting businesses to get involved?* This is something we all deal with, all the time. How do you get a business to come to the table and participate or say yes? Do you go out and just proactively knock on their doors? Or what do you do?

STEVE BEAN: Yeah, definitely, Corinne or Steve, jump in, but it's been pretty remarkable. The Digital NEST has become a brand, and I think that's one of the most powerful things that our youth

have been able to take advantage of, is the community knows Digital NEST, the business community. Word is that we're producing good talent, we're doing great work, so there's a lot of trust in our brand, trust in Digital NEST. So, they actually have come to us. We have people coming to us with job opportunities. I just got one sent to me this morning saying, "Hey, there's a new startup in the area looking for new talent." So, we're doing great with, I would say, kind of local companies.

And when we brought in Corinne, one of the things we wanted her to help us tackle was "How do we engage Silicon Valley and some of the bigger companies?" Corinne, I don't know if you want to speak to that, but...

CORINNE KAPPELER: Yeah, given the time, I'll leave it at that.

STEVE WRIGHT: Well, that's good. I think we're getting near the end here. I'm looking at the questions, and we covered most of the hot topics. I know Pat McClanahan has a question about programming. I know the answer to that. Yeah, you need to know a little programming these days, too! Coding, programming, whatever, but it's not as hard as it used to be.

Well, this is great work, starting, I guess, around Hartnell and that area of Salinas. You're dealing with a population of hardworking people. I don't know if anybody has read *The Grapes of Wrath* or whatever that can identify. I've driven through that area and worked with Hartnell a couple of times, and it's a wonderful place. That's where, I think, we also have the CS in 4 program between Hartnell and the Cal State nearby in Monterey, where...

So, I love what you're doing. My challenge is always looking at things statewide—how can I take what you're doing there and help facilitate a statewide thing? And our first step is today, so I hope that folks who are here can spread the word. This will be out on archived video in about a week, and you can get other people to watch it. We're more than happy to host another session looking at how to implement this or how to coordinate funding or anything like that. We'd be happy to do that once we get a collection of colleges that are interested, maybe in the spring. So, that would be good.

Any other final comments from Jacob, Steve, or Corinne?

JACOB MARTINEZ: No, I just really want to thank you all for your time.

STEVE WRIGHT: All right, good. Thank you very much. Have a good week.

STEVE BEAN: I just want to give a shoutout to Leslie because her Careers in Arts program at Cabrillo was one of the big inspirations for the Make Art Your Day Job partnership that we're working on with Hartnell.

STEVE WRIGHT: Well, that's good. I love the way we learn from each other. The community college system is just... It always sends chills up my spine, all the good work that's done by so many people, and it's all without anything more than just people's good intentions working together, and that's what I love so much about the people here. Thank you all for showing up today and have a wonderful week.